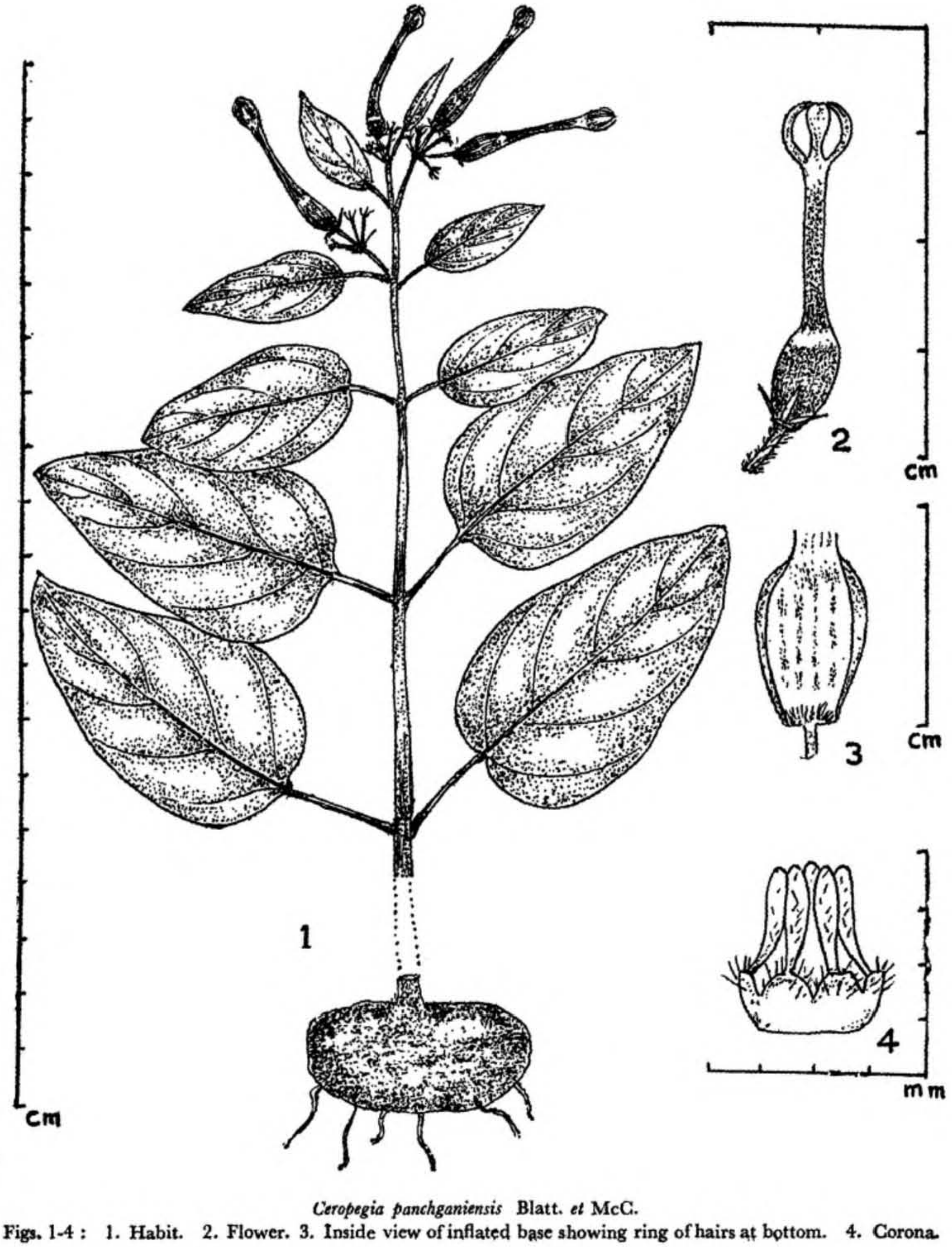
CEROPEGIA PANCHGANIENSIS BLATT. *ET* McCANN (ASCLEPIADACEAE) —A LITTLE KNOWN SPECIES, REDISCOVERED

Blatter and McCann (1933) described *Ceropegia panchganiensis*, an erect, broad-leaved species, from Panchgani, in Satara district, Maharashtra, based on *Blatter* 200. According to the authors, this species differed from *C. lawii* Hook. f. (the only other erect species with broad leaves known then from Western India) in its leaves with subcordate base; peduncles 4-5-flowered; pedicels 8-15 mm long; corolla much inflated at base. However, the protologue also provides some more features distinct from *C. lawii* Hook. f. Neither the type nor any authentic specimen of *C. panchganiensis* is available in any of the well-known herbaria including Blatter herbarium (*BLAT*) at St. Xavier's College, Bombay.

Later, McCann (1945) merged his *C. panchganiensis* under *C. lawii* without any comment. The reason for this merger, as it can be judged now, lies in almost total absence of true *C. lawii* Hook. f. in Indian herbaria and its imperfect knowledge. Therefore, since then, *C. panchganiensis* was treated as synonymous to *C. lawii* Hook. f. by subsequent workers like Huber (1957), Santapau et Irani (1958) and others until Venkatareddi (1968) tried to restore it to its original specific status based on his collections from Ambavane-Sakarpathar area in Pune district, Maharashtra, which were found to be misidentified and later described new as *C. sahyadrica* by Ansari et Kulkarni (1971). While scrutinizing the specimens labelled as *C. lawii* Hook. f. available at *BLAT*, it was noticed that one specimen, *Irani* 2005 (NI 2005) from Mahabaleshwar, in Satara district, though immature, came very close to *C. panchganiensis* Blatt *et* McC. Subsequent efforts around Lingmala, near Mahabaleshwar, resulted in the collection of two *Ceropegias* which appeared distinct from the known ones and, on scrutiny, was found to agree with the protologue of *C. panchganiensis* Blatt. et McC. This collection, *Ansari* 105090 (*BSI*) represents the first authentic and mature specimens of *C. panchganiensis*. In the absence of the type, as mentioned earlier, *Ansari* 105090A is designated as a Neotype. The distinguishing features of *C. panchganiensis* and *C. lawii* are tabulated below.

Features	*C. panchganiensis* Blatt. *et* McC.	*C. lawii* Hook. f.
Cymes	4-5-flowered, pedunculate.	many-flowered, pedunculate, sometimes epedunculate also.
Corolla	*tube* : inflated base obovate, suddenly contracted above into a narrow uniformly cylinderical part ; inside the base with distinct longitudinal purple lines and a dull white ring at the mouth separating the narrow elongated dark purple parts above (white ring visible outside also).	*tube* : base slightly inflated, elliptic-ovoid, gradually merging avove into a narrow subcylinderical part, slightly enlarging at apex ; inside generally dark purple, getting pale near the apex.
	lobes : always glabrous inside.	*lobes* : sometimes with minute stiff hairs inside.
Corona	*outer* : cupular, 5-lobed, bicuspidate or subtruncate, dark purple.	*outer* : saucer-like, of 10 obtuse lobes, pale white.
	inner : erect, thick, fleshy oblanceolate or subclavate, yellow *ca* twice as long as the outer.	*inner* : erect, slender, white, *cc* 4-5 times longer than the outer.

An illustration is provided along with the description for easy identification.



Ceropegia panchganiensis Blatt. *et* McC.
Figs. 1-4 : 1. Habit. 2. Flower. 3. Inside view of inflated base showing ring of hairs at bottom. 4. Corona.

Ceropegia panchganiensis Blatt. et McC. in Journ. Bombay Nat. Hist. Soc. 36: 534-535. 1933.

Erect herb, 45-50 cm high, root tuberous. Leaves 6-9 × 3-6 cm, ovate, ovate-oblong to ovate-lanceolate, acute or acuminate at apex, rounded or subcordate at base; petiole up to 2.5 cm long. Cymes 4-5-flowered; peduncles 5-15 mm long, hairy; pedicels 8-15 mm long, hairy. Sepals 3-4 mm long, hairy or glabrous. Corolla 3-4 cm long; tube 2.5-3.0 cm long, greyish outside, base inflated in lower one-third to one-fourth part, uniformly cylindrical above, narrowing at apex, inside with a ring of hairs at the bottom of the inflated base; lobes 6-7 × 4 mm, obovate acute, glabrous; tips incurve, connate, forming a sub-globose head. Outer corona cupular, *ca* 1.0 mm long, 5-lobed, with long bristly hairs; inner 2 mm long, erect, with a few hairs. Pollen masses minute, yellow (Figs. 1-4).

Neotype: Maharashtra: Lingmala, near Mahabaleshwar, Satara district, *Ansari* 105090A (*CAL*).

Note: The tubers of this species were introduced in the experimental plots of Botanical Survey of India, Pune which flowered during July - August.

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ETHNOBOTANY OF THE 'KORKUS' IN MAHARASHTRA

'Korkus' are a tribe of aborigines residing in the northernmost parts of the Akola District, in Maharashtra. These tribals fully depend on herbal medicines for all their ailments. They believe in supernatural powers of some objects and make use of many plants in rituals connected with different social activities and in other practices against ghosts and evil spirits.

The authors during their plant exploration work during the years 1977-79, ascertained from the Korkus some of the plants and plant products they were making use of. For example they used the roots of *Abrus precatorius* in *Tayit* (Talisman) to get rid of an evil spirit. They also believe that the smoke from burning of twigs and leaves of *Achyranthes aspera* drives away ghosts. Further, the tribals invariably keep with them in their house a stick of *Calamus rotang* or of *Murraya exotica* or twigs of *Tamarix ericoides* in the belief that they would not be haunted by ghosts. Here it has to be mentioned that though these tribals used many plants in their magicc-religious beliefs from a long time, all the factors involved could not be analysed.

However, on the use of plants for medi-